

# CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE



Enter information directly into this document.  
**SAVE the document on your computer with your congregation's name,  
city and date completed as part of the file name.**

**EMAIL COMPLETED PROFILE TO [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org).**  
**Keep a copy for your records.**

## Congregation Name and Location

Name St. John Lutheran Church  
Mailing address 4608 Brambleton Avenue, SW  
City Roanoke State/Province VA Zip/Postal Code 24018  
Telephone 540-774-0712 Fax 540-774-3680  
Email address office@stjohnlutheran.org  
Congregation website www.stjohnlutheran.org  
Seeking  Full-time pastor  Part-time pastor  Either full-time or part-time  
Call will be for  Solo pastor  Senior pastor  Associate pastor

## Congregational President or Vice President

Name Jack Hays Title President  
Mailing address 5506 Warwood Dr  
City Roanoke State/Province VA Zip/Postal Code 24018  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone 540-492-3756  
Email address ljackhays@gmail.com

## Call Committee Chair

Name Dr. Austin Spruill  
Mailing address 5949 Coleman Rd  
City Roanoke State/Province VA Zip/Postal Code 24018  
Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone 540-529-7312  
Email address austinspruill@gmail.com

## Congregational Demographics

Number of **paid** staff (full- or part-time): Clergy 2 Lay professionals 10 Secretarial 1

Average worship attendance 400 (pre-COVID) Average Sunday school attendance 120

Indicate the type of community in which your congregation is located (is it small town, small city, suburban, large city, farming, industrial, etc.).

Suburban

Describe the congregation's ethnic composition and age distribution.

Mostly Caucasian; numbers evenly distributed across all age-groups

Does the congregation have a clear vision for mission – a clear and shared understanding of where God is leading you? If so, state it as succinctly as possible.

Our “vision” for missions is God’s vision for missions as articulated in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20). The out workings of this mission mandate for the Church occurs in many ways. For St. John Lutheran four words reflect our calling and understanding of our mission as a congregation in the Body of Christ:

We are **orthodox**. We preach and teach the Word of God as the Great Tradition of the apostolic Church has always proclaimed. Thus, we uphold the authority of Scripture; we teach the historic doctrines of the Church according to orthodox Lutheran teaching; and we encourage lifelong spiritual formation as essential to discipleship. We believe the Word of God is living and active, and when spoken through the power of the Holy Spirit will accomplish the purpose for which it is proclaimed.

We are **sacramental**. We embrace two sacraments -Baptism and Holy Communion- as Christ’s means of grace to nurture, sustain, and shape us as His people and draw us into union as the Body of Christ. From this sacramental perspective, we promote the model of small groups to promote relational ministry to bring us into deeper community.

We are **liturgical**. We value the historic practice of worship handed down from Israel to the apostolic Church. Normally we offer two Sunday morning services of Word and Sacrament each week, with many other opportunities for worship at various times and occasions. However, due to COVID restrictions we currently offer four services on Sunday. Two services follow a traditional form of the Lutheran and Anglican liturgies; two other services also incorporate a liturgical flow but with a more contemporary expression. We follow the church year and celebrate its main festivals.

We are **missional**. We desire to help in completing the task of the Great Commission by living out our faith in Jesus domestically and globally through various mission endeavors. We are in partnership with two global ministries, one ministering in Haiti, Jordan, and India, and the other in Zambia. We also support other missionary activity overseas including the global missions of NALC. Locally, we support and participate with several ministries in the Roanoke Valley. (See list of ministries and more details below). Approximately 13% of our congregational spending plan goes to missions, and we hope to increase this percentage each year.

### **What are the primary goals of your congregation?**

1. Focus on Word & Sacrament ministries as the chief priority, recognizing that everything flows from the Word through worship, preaching, and teaching.
2. Develop disciples for Christ and His Gospel, aiming to be a church of disciples who make disciples.
3. Extend our mission, locally and globally, both spiritually and materially.
4. Expand our Life Together Groups (small groups), incorporating youth, women, men, and singles to cultivate authentic Christian community.
5. Foster the orthodox spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, Bible study, and the stewardship of one's whole life in Christ.

### **Describe your congregation's worship practice (liturgy, hymns, vestments, music, hymnals, and frequency of Holy Communion).**

We offer weekly services throughout the year, with many other seasonal opportunities for worship. Two Sunday services are primarily traditional in shape, with vestments, organ, choir, etc., while the two other services are largely contemporary in shape, with a Praise Team, no vestments, etc. However, all services include Word and Sacrament, and the contemporary service has most of the parts of the traditional liturgy (confession, Creed, etc.) All services reinforce our commitment to orthodoxy. During the Covid-19 season, we've offered four services each Lord's Day, with one livestreamed on the congregation's YouTube channel. We will most likely continue to provide an online option for worshipers moving forward.

### **Describe your congregation's Christian education ministry.**

We aim for a comprehensive Christian education ministry across all ages. Our education outreach begins in the nursery, with our littlest children beginning to hear and learn from Scripture in Christian community. Our primary grades continue in this focus on formation through Scripture. From grades pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup>, our children learn the foundational events of salvation history from Genesis through Revelation. The junior and senior high school classes offer opportunities for discussion around Gospel and culture studies. Our confirmation ministry for 9<sup>th</sup> graders meets for a year-long study of the faith based on the Nicene Creed. We usually offer three adult Sunday School courses each semester. One concentrates on Bible study. Another focuses on discipleship issues. The third takes up doctrinal and theological explorations. In addition to Sunday School, we have many Bible studies throughout the week for men and women. Our Life Together small group ministry also provides on-going Christian education opportunities. We are also blessed with a strong young adults' ministry that includes a weekly gathering for education and fellowship. Several of our church members are actively involved in that.

### **Describe the congregation's current activities for mission and outreach.**

We strive to reach out in mission for the sake of Christ and the blessing for many both locally and globally. We support financially and prayerfully two global mission organizations and a host of local ones. About 13% of the congregation's budget is designated for outreach. Beyond that figure, we also provide full Thanksgiving meals every year to over 150 families, sponsor mission trips for our youth every summer, mobilize into the community for hands-on mission on our Compassion Weekend event, and engage in a great variety of other outreach endeavors. Supporting the local crisis pregnancy center—the Blue Ridge Women's Center—has been an important way we have put into practice our belief in the sanctity of every human life from conception.

The NALC is committed to moving away from an institutional understanding of the Church, to the biblical commission to be a community of followers of Jesus who focus on being disciples and making disciples. Which best describes your congregation's understanding of this movement? [Type an X by the appropriate response] \_\_\_\_

- Have heard about it
- Have been involved personally
- Some in the congregation are involved, some are not
- Congregation understands, is on board and involved

List the *Top Five Things* your congregation hopes for in its next Pastor

1. Deep personal faith
2. Steadfast in life and godliness
3. Pastor/Shepherd
4. Approachable, hospitable, and accessible
5. Commitment to St. John's distinctives: orthodox, sacramental, liturgical, and missional

What were the three most significant events in your congregation's history? Provide the years in which these events happened and why they are important to your congregation.

1. **Mark being called as pastor for SJL (1987)** By the time he retires, Pastor Mark will have shepherded the congregation for 35 years. His model of a leader who knows and cares deeply for the individuals in the congregation, and who provides engaging, biblical teaching relevant to daily life has shaped the culture of the congregation. His humility, strong pastoral gifting, sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and fearless commitment to orthodoxy will be part of his legacy and leaves an indelible mark on SJL. At the same time, we look forward to our new senior pastor providing a fresh voice and vision for shepherding, preaching, and teaching.
2. **Building expansion and addition of contemporary service (2003)** The doubling of the size of the church facility in 2003 created more space for growth in numbers and allowed for a worship service for those drawn to Lutheran theology and liturgy but preferring more contemporary music and a more informal worship setting. It also increased the opportunities for the congregation to make the church facilities more available to groups in the wider community (E-TEEN community Bible studies, support groups, refugee support, Faith Christian School basketball teams, etc.). The building is now in use almost seven days every week, even during this time of the Covid-19.
3. **Leaving the ELCA (2009/2010) and joining the NALC (2015)** The leadership of the congregation, ordained and lay, had been concerned for years by several trends in the ELCA. These trends included the rejection of Scripture as authoritative for marriage and sexuality. When the ELCA officially made decisions on these matters that overturned 2,000 years of orthodox, biblical teaching, the congregation was ready to take a stand on the authority of the Word of God. While this prompted many to leave the congregation, the majority who remained grew stronger and bolder in their lives of faith. Our decision also attracted many in the community to be a part of St. John. The first vote to leave the ELCA took place in September, 2009, followed by the second and final vote in January, 2010. The congregation then affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC). We appreciated our participation in LCMC. However, in 2015 the congregation joined the North American Lutheran Church as we believed the NALC provided a sturdier church

organization for our long-term partnership in the Gospel. These decisions over the past decade have helped us embrace the Word of God even more deeply and led us to identify the four “distinctives” of our congregation—orthodox, sacramental, liturgical, and missional.

4. **Responding to Covid-19 (2020/2021)** The impact of the global pandemic has emphasized several things we value as a community. The church staff has regularly contacted families and singles to be aware of needs in the congregation. Discipleship opportunities have continued through online worship, small groups, Sunday School classes, a local youth mission trip and an outdoor Vacation Bible School to maintain safety protocols. When the congregation began to offer in-person worship services again, the Sunday schedule was redesigned to include four services (8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 4 p.m.) to allow plenty of space for worshipers to gather safely. The service has continued to be livestreamed on our YouTube channel as well. In addition, the generosity of the congregation has been displayed by a record amount of giving in 2020 which has allowed us to provide many thousands of dollars beyond what we had budgeted for missions and ministries locally and globally.

**Has your congregation participated in the Congregational Workshop Preparatory to the Call Process? [Type an X by the appropriate response]**

Yes                       No

**What were the three most significant results of the workshop?**

1. Opportunity for congregation to participate in the call process.
2. Participants were able to give specific input concerning ministries at St. John, relationship between pastors and congregation, and relationship between pastors and council.
3. The Call Committee used a questionnaire to obtain feedback from the congregation concerning the key qualities and characteristics we are looking for in our next pastor.

**Describe the nature and extent of any significant current or recent conflict in the congregation. Is this conflict resolved, or ongoing? If resolved, how was it resolved?**

Several significant discussions within the church council surfaced this past year. The council spent much time discussing the issues of women’s ordination, how to respond to the racial tensions in the nation, and when to reopen the church for in-person worship during the Covid-19 pandemic. None of these debates spilled over into significant conflict in the larger congregation. At the same time, the council members were not in unanimous agreement about how we should deal with these three issues. But the council was able to have these discussions and come to resolutions to move forward together without incurring brokenness in the group or the congregation.

**How does your congregation handle conflict/tension? Which of the following do you think best describes your congregation? [Type an X by the appropriate response]**

- As a church, we respect and listen to each other and work things through without generating divisiveness.
- As a church, we try to respect and listen to each other, but it is not uncommon for differences of opinion to be a problem and for some people to choose sides. Some have left our church because of conflict.
- Conflict hurts our sense of unity, but we tend not to talk about it.
- Painful experience with conflict has been present, but it has been worked through, and we have learned from the experience.
- We have had some painful experiences with conflict, and they linger in the background.
- Open conflict is present, and we need a minister who can help us deal with it.
- Other (describe).....



When the Congregational Vacancy List is updated, a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) is included announcing each congregation's ministry. If you wish, your call committee may compose that summary, realizing it may be edited/formatted as needed.

St. John Lutheran Church, Roanoke prayerfully seeks our next senior pastor to continue to lead us "to worship and serve God in love and obedience," as our mission statement proclaims. After a long pastorate, our current senior pastor will be retiring in February, 2022. We hope that his ministry and our next senior pastor's ministry will overlap to help ensure a smooth leadership transition. St. John is a vibrant community of followers of Jesus Christ where love for God and neighbor, worship, Scripture, prayer, and mission especially hold our hearts.

Consider filming a video to be included with your Congregational Profile on the [NALC website Vacancy List](#). We invite your call committee to make a 3-5 minute video introducing prospective pastoral candidates to your context and congregation. The video can be informal, explaining what your congregation is seeking in a pastor and showing images of the members of your congregation and your worship environment. Here are some sample videos: [Example One](#), [Example Two](#). These samples were not produced by the NALC. They are both simply examples of the type of content you could include in a video.

#### Video Submission Instructions:

Upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo. (Here are instructions on how to upload to YouTube: [wikihow.com/Upload-a-Video-to-YouTube](http://www.wikihow.com/Upload-a-Video-to-YouTube).) Include a link to the video below. Make sure the link allows for public access to the video.

[video link]

Provide any other information about your congregation that may be helpful in the call process.

[enter text]

Completed by: William Austin Spruill Date: March 1, 2021

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## SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

**SAVE A COPY OF THIS PROFILE TO YOUR COMPUTER.** Use "Save As" and specify document file name as:

Congregation name, City, Date

**\*\*Email** a copy of the completed profile to the Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry, [dwendel@thenalc.org](mailto:dwendel@thenalc.org).

Alternative submission method ONLY if you do not have email: Print and mail the complete profile to:

North American Lutheran Church  
Attn: Pr. David Wendel  
2299 Palmer Dr., Suite 220  
New Brighton, MN 55112-2202

In addition, mail or email a copy of the completed profile to your mission district dean (can be found at [thenalc.org/mission-districts/](http://thenalc.org/mission-districts/)).

Should you have questions, call Pr. David Wendel, assistant to the bishop for ministry, at 719-650-8171 (cell).